

Message Text

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11

ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-04 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 OMB-01 OPR-02 DRC-01 AID-20 LAB-06 SIL-01

EB-11 SCCT-02 SY-04 COME-00 IO-14 /157 W

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R 080540Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5118

INFO AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PK

SUBJ: PAKISTAN: SUMMER OF DISCONTENT?

REF: LAHORE 813 (NOTAL); KARACHI 1241 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: SINCE OUR LAST INTERNAL POLITICAL ASSESSMENT IN MID-MAY (ISLAMABAD 4832), THE LEVEL OF AGITATION IN PAKISTAN HAS INCREASED SHARPLY ALONG WITH DAILY TEMPERATURES. FOREMOST HAS BEEN ANTI-AHMADIYA AGITATION IN PUNJAB PROVINCE. IN ADDITION, UNREST OVER LARGELY ECONOMIC ISSUES HAS LED TO UNIVERSITY TEACHERS STRIKES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY AND HAS THE POTENTIAL TO PRECIPITATE ANOTHER BOUT OF INDUSTRIAL LABOR STRIKES IN MAJOR URBAN CENTERS IN COMING WEEKS. END SUMMARY.

1. CONSULATE LAHORE HAS ALREADY REPORTED EXTENSIVELY ON THE PUNJAB SECTARIAN DISPUTE PITTING ORTHODOX MUSLIMS AGAINST THE RELATIVELY SMALL BUT HIGHLY VISIBLE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AHMADIYA COMMUNITY. WHILE NOT OVERTLY ANTI-GOVERNEMENT,

THE WIDESPREAD AGITATION AGAINST THE AHMADIYAS HAS INEVITABLY FORCED THE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE COUNTERMEASURES TO CONTAIN RIOTING AND LOOTING, ACTIONS WHICH IN TURN HAVE BROUGHT THE GOVERNMENT INTO DIRECT CONFLICT WITH STUDENTS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING SOME ULEMA. THE GOP'S REACTION TO THE REVIVAL OF ACTIVE AGITATION AGAINST THE AHMADIYA COMMUNITY HAS BEEN THE USUAL ONE OF SOOTHING WORDS, OF NEWS BLACKOUTS, OF BANS ON MEETINGS, PROCESSIONS, ETC., AND OF THE DEPLOYMENT OF POLICE AND FEDERAL SECURITY FORCES TO TROUBLE SPOTS. THE SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH THE GOP VIEWS THE ANTI-AHMADIYA OUTBREAK WAS HIGHLIGHTED BY THE PRIME MINISTER'S PERSONAL APPEARANCE AT THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY JUNE 3 TO DELIVER A LECTURE ON THE NEED FOR NATIONAL UNITY, ON THE FOLLY OF SECTARIAN CONFLICTS, AND ON THE COMMITMENT OF HIS GOVERNMENT AND OF PAKISTAN'S CONSTITUTION TO ORTHODOX ISLAMIC (I.E., NON-AHMADIYA) PRECEPTS. EFFORTS BY SOME RELIGIOUS POLITICAL PARTIES TO HAVE AHMADIYAS OFFICIALLY PROCLAIMED A NON-MUSLIM "MINORITY" SECT HAVE SO FAR BEEN IGNORED.

2. THE ANTI-AHMADIYA AGITATION REMINDS US AGAIN OF THE POWER WHICH RELIGION EXERTS OVER THE MASSES AND THE POTENTIAL FOR TROUBLE INHERENT IN ANY RELIGIOUS DISPUTE HERE. WE WOULD HAZARD A GUESS THAT LARGE SCALE AND VIOLENT AGITATION AGAINST AHMADIYAS HAS PROBABLY ABOUT RUN ITS COURSE. SO LONG AS STUDENTS AND OTHERS ARRESTED DURING THE AGITATION REMAIN JAILED, HOWEVER, DEMONSTRATIONS CAN BE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE. THESE THINGS HAVE A LIFE OF THEIR OWN IN SOUTH ASIA.

3. STRIKES BY UNIVERSITY TEACHERS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY HAVE LED TO THE EARLY CLOSING OF ALL SCHOOLS, A PRECAUTIONARY MOVE TO HEAD OFF TROUBLE FROM THE STUDENT COMMUNITY. IN KARACHI, FORMER PPP MINISTER OF STATE MERAJ MOHAMMAD KHAN, NOW A LEADER OF THE ULTRA-LEFT, WAS PERSONALLY INVOLVED IN A TEACHER-POLICE CLASH, BUT OTHERWISE POLITICIANS HAVE APPARENTLY STAYED OUTSIDE THE CONTROVERSY BETWEEN TEACHERS AND THE EDUCATION MINISTRY. IN ANOTHER DISPUTE BETWEEN MEMBERS OF THE PROFESSIONAL CLASS AND GOVERNMENT, PAKISTAN JOURNALISTS UNION HAS BEEN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SUPPORTING A LINGERING SQUABBLE BETWEEN EMPLOYEES OF THE PEOPLES' PARTY NEWSPAPER, MUSAWAAT, AND THE NEWSPAPERS'S MANAGEMENT GKBEGUM BHUTTO IS CHAIRWOMAN OF THE BOARD), JOURNALISTS IN KARACHI AND ELSEWHERE HAVE GIVEN TOKEN SUPPORT TO THEIR LAHORE COLLEAGUES, BUT THE DISPUTE APPEARS ESSENTIALLY ONE BETWEEN A HANDFUL OF JOURNALISTS AND THE MANAGEMENT/GOVERNMENT WITHOUT ENGAGING MOST JOURNALISTS.

4. CONSULATE LAHORE REPORTS CONTINUED LABOR UNREST IN INDUSTRIAL ZONES THROUGHOUT THE PROVINCE. PUNJAB LABOR IS NEITHER MONOLITHIC NOR DIRECTED BY A SINGLE SOURCE, ALTHOUGH IN LAHORE THERE IS A FAST-RISING GROUP OF YOUNG FOLLOWERS OF THE LATE ABDUR REHMAN. THE CURRENT UNREST SEEMS TO BE CAUSED BY SEVERAL FACTORS INCLUDING INTRA-FACTORY BATTLES FOR LEADERSHIP OF SPECIFIC UNIONS OR FOR OFFICIAL ACCEPTANCE OF ONE UNION OVER ANOTHER, INTER-UNION RIVALRY IN ADJOINING FACTORIES, POLITICAL COMPETITION FOR UNION LEADERSHIP, POLITICAL INCITEMENT OF UNIONS AGAINST FACTORY OWNERS, INCREASING REFUSAL OF FINANCIALLY SQUEEZED MANAGEMENT TO COMPROMISE OR EVEN NEGOTIATE WITH LABOR, AND FINALLY, GENERAL LABOR UNHAPPINESS AT BEING CAUGHT IN THE BIND OF RISING PRICES AND STAGNANT WAGES. ALL OPPOSITION POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE MADE PRELIMINARY EFFORTS TO EXPLOIT THIS LABOR UNREST, BUT THEIR ATTEMPTS SO FAR HAVE FAILED TO COALESCE. KHAR SUPPORTERS IN THE PPP ARE ALSO REPORTED TO BE FORMENTING LABOR PROBLEMS ON A SMALL SCALE. SO FAR, THE PUNJAB PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN NO POSITIVE ACTION EITHER TO FIND SOLUTIONS TO LABOR PROBLEMS OR TO TRY TO ORGANIZE LABOR UNDER PPP CONTROL.

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5119

INFO AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

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5. CONSULATE KARACHI REPORTS THAT THE INDUSTRIAL LABOR FORCE IN THAT CITY IS INCREASINGLY DISSATISFIED OVER RISING PRICES, WHICH HAVE, IN THE ESTIMATION OF MANY WORKERS, NOW WIPE OUT THE BENEFITS OF WAGE INCREASES RECEIVED SINCE 1972 AND HAVE BECOME THE PARAMOUNT ISSUE AMONG LOWER INCOME GROUPS. GREATEST DISSATISFACTION AND POTENTIAL FOR VIOLENCE PROBABLY EXISTS IN PATHAN WORKER COMMUNITIES. POLICE ARE CLEARLY SENSITIVE TO DANGERS IN THESE AREAS AND REPORTEDLY ARE ARRESTING WORKERS IN TWOS AND THREES UPON THE LEAST SIGNS OF UNREST IN ORDER TO KEEP SMALL INCIDENTS FROM GROWING INTO A GENERAL OUTBREAK OF VIOLENCE SUCH AS DEVELOPED TWO YEARS AGO IN JUNE. ALTHOUGH STUDENT-TEACHER DISTURBANCES WERE ORIGINALLY MOTIVATED BY ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS, THEY NOW APPEAR TO BE TAKING ON INCREASINGLY POLITICAL OVERTONES IN THE SIND, WHERE DISSIDENT PPP MEMBERS SUCH AS THE TALPUR BROTHERS, AS WELL AS OPPOSITION POLITICAL PARTIES, ARE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE SITUATION TO FURTHER THEIR SEVERAL POLITICAL INTERESTS. POLICE REPRESSION
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OF HYDERABAD BYE-ELECTION DISTURBANCES IS NOW BEING USED ALONG WITH ALLEGED POLICE "HIGH-HANDEDNESS" IN SUPPRESSION OF TEACHERS DEMONSTRATION AS A DUAL BASIS FOR POLITICAL PROTEST. (KARACHI REPORTS COALESCING OF SEVERAL GROUPS FOR PROTEST GENERAL STRIKE JUNE 7.)

6. WHAT IS STRIKING TO US ABOUT THE CURRENT TEACHERS/ JOURNALISTS QUARRELS WITH THE GOP IS THE EVIDENT INABILITY OF THE BHUTTO GOVERNMENT TO RESOLVE THE DISPUTES WITH DESPATCH. THIS SUGGESTS THAT THESE GROUPS, AT LEAST, ARE BECOMING LESS WARY OF GOP COERCION THAN HERETOFORE AND MORE CONFIDENT THAT THEY CAN HAVE THEIR WAY WITH THE REGIME. FOR ITS PART, THE GOP EVIDENCES AN AWARENESS THAT SUBMISSION TO THE DEMANDS OF SPECIFIC PRESSURE GROUPS, WHEN MANY ARE FEELING PINCH OF INFLATION, COULD ACT TO ENCOURAGE OTHER GROUPS (INCLUDING ORGANIZED LABOR) TO DEMAND A LARGER SHARE OF AN ALREADY OVERCOMMITTED PIE. LITTLE COMFORT CAN BE EXPECTED FROM THE NEW BUDGET WHICH, IN FACT, MAY EXERCABATE EXISTING GRIEVANCES IN URBAN AREAS. IT WON'T BE AN EASY SUMMER FOR THE PRIME MINISTER.
LUPPI

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